

SIDELIGHTS

READ THE SIGNS.

Honolulu has enough educational institutions to provide all its inhabitants sufficient learning to make a native of Boston, in the use of the English language, look like a first-grade schoolboy. But when it comes down to the practical use of that education in the making of signs, a careful investigation will show that the money expended has to a great extent been wasted.

Signs are an old subject, but always new. In Honolulu it has been often exploited, but never exhausted. I took a trip down Palama way on Thursday, in search of a store where it was told me homemade macaroni of first-class quality could be found. On my return I walked part of the way, and had my attention attracted to a few curious statements employed for the purpose of attracting the attention of the public to the business being carried on by the occupants of the building in the front of which the announcements appeared.

One man, probably an oriental, evidently intended giving notice that peanuts can be purchased by the paper bag or sugar sack. But either his paint or his knowledge of plurals was shy, for he cut out an "s," with the result that the information afforded you by the sign is: "Roast Peanut, wholesale and retail," may be procured.

The man immediately next to him was liberal in provision for cheap lodging, paint and conception of the use of the apostrophe, for he proclaimed as follows: "Tai Loy Lodging House 15c—25c—one night's." The translation thereof can not be given by me, for it was written on the signboard in Chinese characters.

If your head is of a peculiar shape, and you need to have a tailor made chapeau, an anti-Russian gentlemen by the name of G. Shigawa proclaims in large black letters "Straw Hat Make," and the artist accompanies his somewhat vague claim of the accomplishments of his employer by a painting of a hat intended to look like straw and fashionable, and as lifelike as anything Jamie Wilder ever put on canvas.

And, just before I reached the Nuuanu Stream, I struck a notice, hung up before a modest looking store, which even yet is as inexplicable to me as the recruiting of Russian "laborers." It was spelled correctly, and evidently constructed by a professional painter. But while he who ran might likewise read, I doubt very much whether he could understand. It said: "W. Shigawa, Tinsmiths, Umbrella Repairing, Etc." "Tinsmiths" was all right, although I could not quite understand how one individual could boast of being more than one. "Umbrella Repairing" was also all right. But the "Etc." bothered me, and when I got home I looked it up in my son's Funk & Wagnall's Standard Dictionary. Here is what these learned gentlemen say it means: "And all other things, or the rest; and so forth: used to indicate others of a kind, class, or the like, to be easily inferred from those already specified."

And if a miracle happens, and a Jap tells the truth, and the dictionary may be relied on, anything in the tin line may be manufactured to order, and repairs, even including those necessary for political fences, will be promptly attended to.

Y. Yamawaki declares he is a "shoe maker," omitting any connection between the last four letters of his name and his chosen profession.

The Chinese permit not the Japs to get the better of them in versatility of occupation or originality of expression. Mr. Ling Kee hired a sign man to help him out in selling merchandise, and the result of their joint efforts may be read by you any time. It is: "Smoke Tobacco and Cold Drink."

The Chinese concern, evidently unable to afford assisting Tom Sharp in paying his assistants and Advertiser bills, has utilized the dust on its plate glass window by cleaning part of it off each day in such a manner as to yield the information to the passer-by that a bakery is being conducted inside.

I sometime since endeavored to establish a puzzle department, but our morning literary visitor would have none of it. Had my request been granted I should have pronounced the following for solution: "G. Hukuda and H. Inikam, Watch, Maker Gold or Silver. Something." The sign quits there and then, without explanation as to how much it costs to watch, or to have gold or silver made, or what "Something" is.

And there were other queer signs too numerous to mention. At the dinner table I informed my provider of some of the discoveries I had made. He looked up for a moment from a composite consumption of soup and the Bulletin, and remarked that sometimes white people made as bad breaks, and that any day, on Queen street, might be observed a sign, some thirty feet long, stating in letters at least two feet deep and several inches thick, "Monument for Cheap Sale." Probably he told the truth, although he does not always do so. However, I subsided, and he resumed his wooing of physical and mental indigestion.

ORIENTAL EDUCATION.

Has it ever occurred to you that the Japs and the Chinese pay at least as much attention to the education of their children as do any other race? Indeed, insofar as the Japs are concerned, I believe the expression could be made stronger.

I don't know what Doctor Clark's statistics will show as to percentages of nationalities attending our public schools, and percentages of illiteracy, and percentages of truancy and other percentages which congress in its wisdom hath decreed shall be figured out and put nicely together and printed for our edification. Perhaps he will not give them correctly. The liberty loving Russians have instilled a new spirit in the people, and a growing tendency can be observed to resent the inquisitorial powers sought to be exercised by government officials. Even a white citizen, dignified by the term "prominent," appears to have become a Vasilieff convert, and figuratively slapped Uncle Sam in the face and pulled his whiskers by curtly informing him that his request for copy along statistical lines was extremely impertinent. It may be that the glorious example set will spread to the orientals, and the enumerators, in their rounds to Chinatown and Japanese camps, will be informed that Hawaii's temperature is too cool for their constitutions, and that a warmer climate should forthwith be sought.

But if the good Doctor gets anywhere near the facts, he will be able to tell us that few of the brown and yellow boys are found on the streets, and few are hoodlums. They haven't time to be. The father and mother avail themselves of the public school system and almost invariably see to it that their youngsters attend. And when the hour of adjournment has arrived, and school lets out, many of their progeny still continue their pursuit of knowledge by attending institutions where their own language is taught; and the balance of the afternoon is thus consumed. I don't know whether the superintendent of public education and his bosses, the board, keep track of these schools or not, but there are plenty of them. Folklore and religion and the queer looking writing and the no less weird spelling are all in the curriculum. In the Chinese schools mathematics including arithmetic, algebra, geometry and trigonometry, must, for some reason or other, be imbued through the assistance of an instrument which bears a startling resemblance to a necessary adjunct to a faro layout—a thing with wires and buttons on it. By means of this the market price of opium, or the average fine imposed for running a che-fa game, or the number of knots Halley is daily consuming, and like interesting statistics can be reliably secured.

And the Jap teachers make their pupils absorb volumes concerning subjects of every nature. I saw one of the students—a boy of about thirteen—returning from his college the other afternoon about five o'clock, with two books, one of which he told me, in good plain, everyday English, concerned photography, and the other botany. The photographs in the first instance, and the representation of plants in the second, bore out his statement, although the text was such as not to amount to corroborating evidence insofar as I was concerned.

And the achievements of the children, in both schools, are much boasted of. When a father finds a monthly report card which shows any of his numerous heirs apparent to stand way up in learning, he puts it in his shirt or his coat or his kimono, and takes it around, and shows it to all of his friends, white, black, brown and indifferent. In all probability it is filed away in his temple or shrine, and kept there with his passport and pictures of his ancestors and family record and other sacred documents.

So do not think, because you are a member of a superior race, that you by any means have a monopoly on filial love, and pride and affection. The oriental, along these lines, if he be a second at all, is a mighty close call.

WATCH INTERPRETERS.

Did you ever endeavor to discover the truth, or perhaps a lie, by means of an interpreter? You may have an interpreter who is under all kinds of obligations to you. He may be your laundryman, or he may be your cook, or he may be the boy who delivers your groceries, bills for which your husband kicks about. If you have had this experience—and I have had it several times—don't depend too much upon what this selfsame interpreter tells you. Investigate closely the question as to whether or not he is a friend of the person whose language is being translated. Investigate closely the question of whether

or not he is interested in the particular matter being investigated. Investigate closely the question of whether he is a member of a different society from that to which the person being investigated pays his monthly dues. Investigate closely whether he is a truly disinterested interpreter. Should he not be so, get another interpreter who is not acquainted, or who is not interested, or is a member of some other society, or who is under obligations to no one, and then strike a fair average of the two interpretations.

When the mathematical process is concluded, you may assume that you have gotten about three-fourths of what you tried to ascertain in the first instance. I have a school friend who was educated in Wellesley College, and during the course therein developed very marked linguistic ability. She studied Japanese and Chinese and Korean and German and French and a bunch of other languages which are useful in the Paradise of the Pacific. Her accomplishments have been carefully concealed by her, and for purposes of her own, she carefully conceals her learning. She tells me that if you want a cock, or a yard-boy, and a particular applicant for the honored position is accompanied by a countryman who is able to talk English, and who questions in his native language the man who is to be paid weekly, you may rest assured that there is as much difference between the real answer and the answer you receive, as there is between the antislavery league and the retail liquor dealers' association. And I am informed by members of the legal fraternity, who occasionally drop into my abode to play whist with my husband, that in court the same close inspection of translations and interpretations is necessary.

Sometimes, do they say, a violent assault by a Porto Rican will be interpreted in such a way as to resemble a love tap; a cane knife used by a Jap, to bear a startling likeness to a fan used to ward off mosquitoes; and a revolver used by a Korean to look like a Fourth-of-July toy pistol.

On the whole, if you want to get at the truth in any matters concerning your household and your material welfare, I have only to say that, should you possess the ability of my Wellesley friend, you make a study of the languages, and rely upon yourself rather than a paid or unpaid interpreter.

A Rushin' Perpetration

Oh

Vaseline and Gasoline

And whiskered Oleo Margarine

Were one day bright and early seen

Walking Merchant, King and Queen.

And they were mad, rix was their spleen,

With ugly looks and glances keen

They wandered to Nuuanu stream

And called out all their fellows.

They said that they had gone and seen

The Governor with glances keen

And asked for bread and Cottolene

And sour milk and nicotine

And chocolate drops and lima bean

And roasted duck and canned sardine

And the Governor he acquiesced and said such men he'd never seen

And Mott-Smith went with a soup tureen

To get the stuff they wanted.

Twas then they said they're getting lean;

The work was hard, the climate keen

And 'twas a shame to work the cream

Of Iwilei society.

And would the Governor condescend

A member of his staff to lend

To cut the bread and the butter spread

And also women and children fend

From onslaughts of the Sheriff's men.

And the Governor said, "Let's arbitrate;

I'm shy of men but maybe late

This week I'll have a fuller slate

And then we'll see about it."

So Vaseline and Gasoline and whiskered Oleo Margarine

With injured spleen and glances mean went down to Nuuanu stream

And told it to their fellows.

D. L. M.

WHY SUSPENSION OF
COASTWISE LAW IS
APPROVED BY NAGEL

By Ernest G. Walker.

(Mail Special to The Advertiser.)

WASHINGTON, April 22.—Secretary

Nagel's opinion regarding the coastwise

suspension bill is expressed in a letter

made public here today. It is as follows:

"Department of Commerce and Labor

—Office of the Secretary.

"Washington, April 21, 1910.

"Dear Sir:—I have your communication

of March 25, asking the opinion of

my department concerning H. R. 7539.

As you are aware, this presents a

controversy as to which a good deal may

be said upon either side.

"The commissioner of navigation is

opposed to the bill as wrong in principle.

Hawaii came under our flag vol-

untarily, and ought to be prepared to

take the bitter with the sweet. He

adds that the penalty of \$200 for trav-

eling in foreign ships is quite liberally

remitted or mitigated, and is therefore

not as serious as it appears.

"Furthermore, the bill is the first de-

parture in a century from the policy of

reserving American trade to American

vessels (a policy which has been held

not to apply to the Philippines). It

will doubtless be followed, if passed, by

bills for opening the Porto Rican trade

to foreign ships, and after the opening

of the Panama Canal it might be fol-

lowed by a bill to allow foreign ships

to carry from our Atlantic to our Pa-

cific Coast. Again, American shipowners

and shipbuilders are opposed to it, and

the American Marine Engineers and

Marine Firemen's Association oppose

it, chiefly because it will put Japanese

crews into competition with Americans.

"On the other hand, there are strong

considerations in favor of this bill, as

are set forth in the following language

in President Roosevelt's annual message

of 1907:

"The unfortunate failure of the

shipping bill at the last session of

the last congress was followed by

the taking off of certain Pacific

steamships, which has greatly ham-

pered the movement of passengers

between Hawaii and the mainland.

Unless the congress is prepared to

provide proper facilities in the way of ship-

ping, should be so far relaxed as to

prevent Hawaii suffering as it is

now suffering.

"Occasionally two weeks elapse be-

tween sailings of American passenger

ships between the Coast and Honolulu,

and this, of course, is a great handicap

on business. The prevailing sentiment

in Hawaii is undoubtedly in favor of

the bill, and it is to be remembered

that relief is asked only with respect to

passengers, and not as to freight.

"Finally, the practical workings of

the penalty clause are to my mind ex-

tremely unsatisfactory. The very fact

that we are constantly called upon to

remit and to mitigate demonstrates the

unsatisfactory condition which now pre-

vails. If the system was just and did

not work oppressively, we should, of

course, once for all refuse to yield to

these demands; and we do yield only

because we recognize that the hardships

are such as to demand relief. I am

inclined to believe that when a system

responds so poorly to actual conditions

the remedy ought perhaps to be sought

in the statute itself, and ought not to

be looked for to such an extent to the

executive officer. I see the following

amendment has been suggested:

"Provided further, That the provi-

sions of this act shall extend only to

foreign vessels plying between ports

of the United States and one or more

of the ports of China, Japan, the Philippines or Aus-

tralia.

"This, it appears to me, would in

some measure maintain the protection

upon which we have insisted and at the

same time give bona fide travelers the

privileges to which they ought to be

entitled. Very respectfully,

"CHARLES NAGEL,

Secretary.

"Hon. William S. Greene, chairman

committee on merchant marine and fish-

eries, house of representatives."

MONEY FOR FILLING

QUEEN EMMA SITE

In the senate on April 12 Mr. Mc-

Cumber submitted a proposed amend-

ment to the Sundry Civil bill, to ap-

propriate \$150,000 for filling in camp site

at Queen Emma Point for camping pur-

poses, etc., at Honolulu, Hawaii. He

also submitted an amendment relative

to the purchase of dredged material for

the development of the naval station

at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, intended to

be proposed by him to the Naval Ap-

propriation bill.

ROOSEVELT PARTY IS

GREETED BY THE KING

CHRISTIANIA, May 4.—Colonel

Roosevelt and his family were greeted

here today at the railway station by

the king and queen of Norway.

GENERAL GREENE ILL.

NEW YORK, May 4.—General Greene

underwent an operation for appendicitis

today. His condition is serious.

ARMORY BURNED.

TOKIO, May 3.—The town of Armori,

near here, was nearly destroyed by fire

today.

Nature's Mysteries

Los Angeles Times.

One is divided in mind whether to read this article as above or to call it Man's Colossal Ignorance. According to the best scientific opinion it is not less than 10,000 years since man, a rational being, using articulate speech and thinking in syllogisms, appeared upon the earth.

Before sunrise these mornings watchers are scanning the eastern skies for a glimpse of the famous Halley's comet, which returns to visit us after a period of seventy-five years. It is more than half a century since a notable planet appeared in our skies heretofore, and when Donati's great light flamed for nights through the western sky covering half a hemisphere in 1853, it was even then an object of terror to a great many people even in our own enlightened country.

We know too much about comets to imagine that they are providential portents. Since Halley's time we have learned a good many of their laws and understand some little thing about comets. We know, for example, that they circulate around the sun passing through our solar system in an orbit either in the form of an ellipse or of a parabola. Those that travel in a parabola come rushing down the skies and swing around our sun, to pass out on its other side far into space and never to return. Our planetary system all travels around the sun in orbits which are elliptical, but the cometic ellipses are much flatter than those of the earth or the other planets. The one in the sky now takes seventy-five years to make its circuit around the sun. The ellipse has two fixed central points instead of the one center of a perfect circle, and these are called the foci of the ellipse. The cometic orbit has one focus very close to the sun and the other far away in space. The movement of the comet is not uniform in its pace throughout the whole of its course. The farther from the sun the slower its progress, and as this diaphanous body rushes down the skyward its pace is accelerated until it whirls around the center of our system at a speed that defies the imagination of man to conceive of what it is. This is in exact conformity to the law of the planets, including our own earth, which at its apogee goes slowly and accelerates its pace as it approaches its perigee. The reason for this is to nicely balance the centrifugal and centripetal forces, for if the earth moved as slowly at its perigee as at its apogee, it would be drawn into the sun and destroyed, whereas if it moved as rapidly at its apogee as at its perigee, it would fly off into space and be lost in a different way, perishing from cold in the one case as it would from heat in the other.

We do not even know what a comet is composed of. Its tenuity, its lack of substantiality, is one of the greatest puzzles about it. This one in the sky now at some near day will pass directly between our earth and the sun, but it will not cast any more shadow than the atmosphere of our earth. The sunlight will gleam not only through its tail, but through the nucleus of the comet. As it comes down the skies toward us, at first there is no tail to the comet, but as it approaches the sun this buds out as if it were some great bird from the unknown that sprouted and grew its tail feathers.

that we are constantly called upon to remit and to mitigate demonstrates the unsatisfactory condition which now prevails. If the system was just and did not work oppressively, we should, of course, once for all refuse to yield to these demands; and we do yield only because we recognize that the hardships are such as to demand relief. I am inclined to believe that when a system responds so poorly to actual conditions the remedy ought perhaps to be sought in the statute itself, and ought not to be looked for to such an extent to the executive officer. I see the following amendment has been suggested:

"Provided further, That the provisions of this act shall extend only to foreign vessels plying between ports of the United States and one or more of the ports of China, Japan, the Philippines or Australia.

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